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Clematis – Planting and Care

To insure success with your Clematis and the beautiful flowers it will produce, we suggest you follow the guidelines offered below.

Choose a location to plant your Clematis where it will have 5 to 6 hours of sunlight.

Clematis roots are long and deep and like it cool and damp. To keep roots cool, mulch the ground around our plant with compost, peat moss, shredded bark.

Loosen the soil to depth and width of 2 feet. Mix the soil with peat moss and/or compost 25-50% organic matter is the ratio you want. Set the plant in the hole so that the crown is 1" below soil level.

Stake the plant on 3 sides and wrap with a piece of screen for protection of the new growth. Also this provides support to train its' growth toward the permanent support.

Water freely and often the first year. In the subsequent years, always soak well once a week in dry weather.

Feed twice a season with a good garden fertilizer such as Fertilome Gardener's Special.

Prune the first spring after planting to 6-12 inches from the ground. The tips of growing shoots can also be pinched out during late spring and early summer to induce additional branching. The more you prune, the first year, the better the future of your plant.

After plants are established for at least a year, prune hard all late flowering varieties. Early bloomers leave alone. Do this pruning in March. Prune out dead wood as necessary. Do not damage live wood, cut back after growth starts, it may well be in April that you prune.

While plant is dormant, protect base from winter freezing and thawing by applying mulch.

Pruning is a matter of choice. Early flowering varieties should not be pruned as they produce flowers on last year's wood. Prune summer flowering varieties as they only produce flowers on the current year's young growth. Double varieties only produce double flowers on old wood so never prune them unless necessary. If your non-pruning varieties need pruning, the best time is a month after they have flowered. Hard pruning varieties should be pruned in the early spring, after buds swell, since they produce flowers on new wood.

If you have limited space for the late flowering varieties, they can all be cut down in the spring.

NOTE: Hard pruning means cutting the plant right down to the lowest pair of buds on each stem (about 6-12"). Optional pruning applies to varieties which flower on both old and new wood. If

you want large early flowers, do not prune, if you want medium size flowers in summer, prune hard.